# *Part II. The Confrontation with Indonesia*

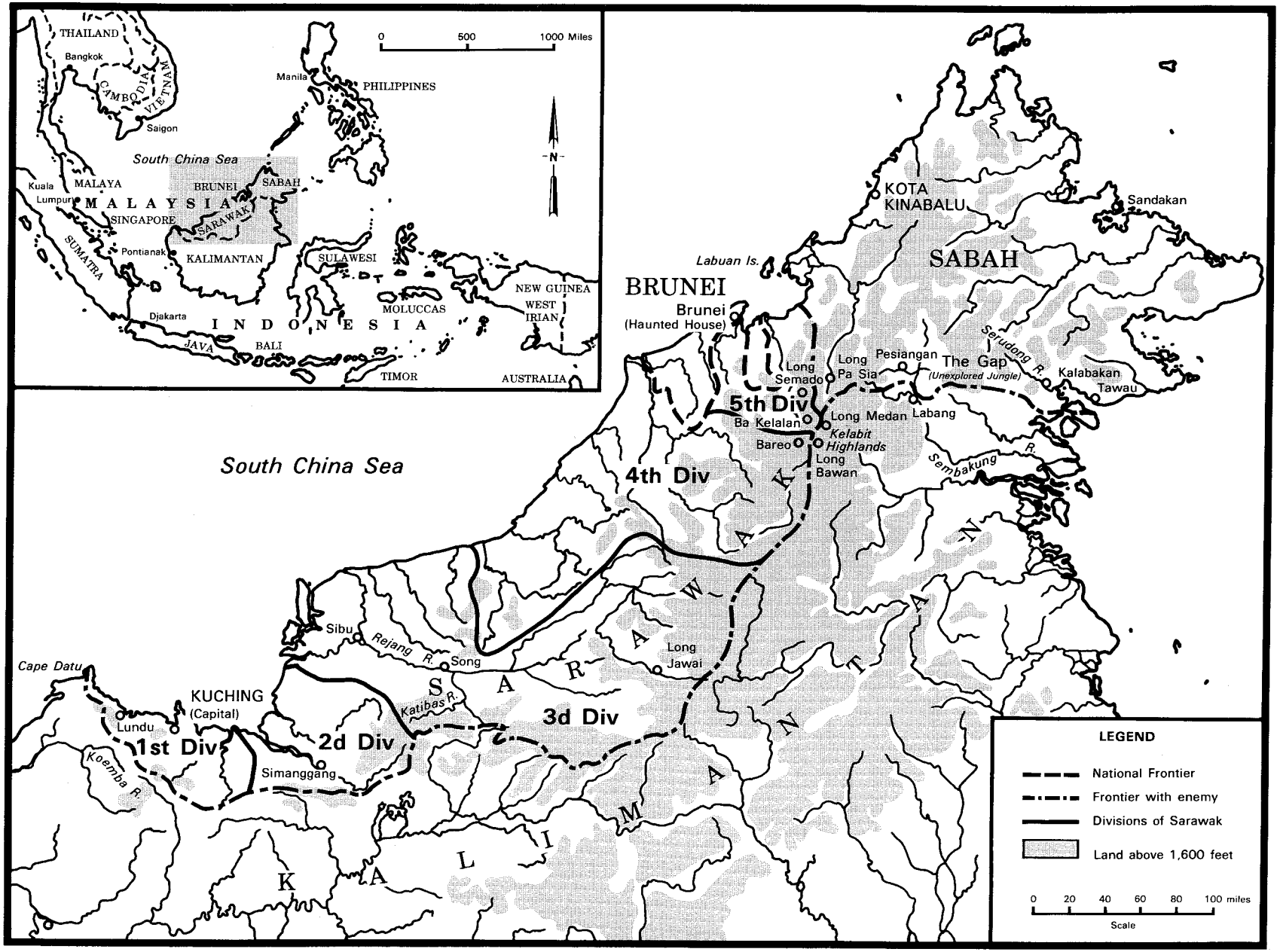
Not long after cleaning out the last isolated pocket of Communist guerrillas in Malaya, the British forces in the Far East found themselves facing another limited war, this time in North Borneo. Initially, the threat seemed to be similar to the one experienced in Malaya—that is, a small, lightly armed, indigenous, Communist-inspired insurgency with limited popular support. However, it became clear that the situation in Borneo, (hereafter called the Confrontation) differed significantly from the Emergency in Malaya. Before discussing these differences, however, it is first necessary to describe the background to and initial events of the Confrontation.

## *Background to the Confrontation*

The large island of Borneo in 1962 comprised four political entities (see map 11). Kalimantan, the southern three-fourths of the island, belonged to Indonesia, independent since 1949. In the north, the British administered the two provinces of Sarawak (in the west) and Sabah, also called North Borneo (in the north). The sultanate of Brunei was an independent state ruled by a sultan but possessing a civil bureaucracy and police force staffed to a large degree by Englishmen.

In 1961, Tunku Abdul Rahman, the prime minister of Malaya, proposed the formation of a new federated state to be known as Malaysia. Malaysia, Rahman suggested, should include the Federation of Malaya, the city-state of Singapore, the sultanate of Brunei, and the two colonial provinces of Sarawak and Sabah. Great Britain endorsed the idea, but President Sukarno of Indonesia opposed it, calling it a British neocolonialist project and a threat to Indonesian security. Sukarno had his own dreams about a greater East Asian federation (MAPHILINDO: Malaya, the Philippines, and Indonesia) under his leadership, which also was to include northern Borneo. Sukarno hoped to prevent the formation of Malaysia by using diplomatic, ideological, and if necessary, military means. He openly announced a policy of "confrontation" in January 1963, following the Brunei revolt of December 1962. Thus, the Brunei revolt was actually the opening act in the play that came to be known as the Confrontation.

The Brunei revolt was launched by a small, indigenous, Communist organization—the Northern Borneo National Army (TNKU)—that had ties to the Communist party of Indonesia. Hoping to create a ground swell of popular support for a takeover of the sultanate, the armed rebels achieved a few preliminary successes, notably the capture of the Shell oil fields at Brunei; the towns of Seria, Limbang, and Lawas; and some smaller villages. Possessing few security forces of his own, the sultan requested British military assistance. Within a matter of days, the British deployed by air and sea the 1st Battalion, 2d Gurkha Rifles; the 1st Battalion, Queen's Own Highlanders; the 1st Battalion, Royal Green Jackets; and 42 and 40 Royal Marine Commandos. On 19 December, Major General Walter Walker was appointed director of operations in Borneo. When no popular support for the rebels appeared, Walker's forces quickly reclaimed the facilities and areas taken by the rebels and then, with




Source: Dickens, *SAS, The Jungle Frontier.*

Map 11. Northern Borneo

the aid of 2,000 to 3,000 Sarawak irregulars under the direction of a civilian, Tom Harrison, hunted the rebels down in small groups from January to March 1963.

Thus began and ended the first of the three stages of the Confrontation: the defeat of the Brunei revolt and the subsequent mopping-up operations in early 1963. Even though the revolt caught Sukarno by surprise, he seized upon it as evidence of the unpopularity of the concept of Malaysia by the inhabitants of northern Borneo, and he used the revolt as grounds for military support to the rebels and, eventually, for intervention by Indonesian regular forces.

During the second stage of the Confrontation, which took place from April 1963 to April 1964, the Indonesians sponsored periodic raids from Kalimantan into northern Borneo in an attempt to raise guerrilla forces and establish semipermanent camps. In large measure, the early raiders were Indonesian-supported TNKU irregulars, Indonesian-trained guerrillas known as IBTs (Indonesian border terrorists), and some Indonesian "volunteers." When these efforts failed to raise sufficient guerrilla forces, the goal of the periodic raids changed to the creation of destabilization in the border areas. At this time, a sprinkling of regular units from the Indonesian Army began to appear.

The third stage of the Confrontation, characterized by overt Indonesian operations in northern Borneo and Malaya, ran from the spring of 1964 until the end of the war in 1966. During this period, Indonesian regular army units conducted most of the raids into northern Borneo. Indonesian troop strength along the border grew steadily from about 2,500 in mid-1964 to as many as 30,000 in 1965.[46] In response, Walker ultimately controlled four brigades, organized into a varying number of infantry and commando battalions (from ten to thirteen), three to four small Special Air Service squadrons, and supporting air force and naval elements—all of which numbered about 17,000 men at the height of the war.[47]

The terrain and political geography of Borneo gave the Indonesians a tactical advantage from the start. Except for the coastal regions, Malaysian Borneo is a "vast, trackless, rail-less expanse of mountain and jungle."[48] Its primary lines of communication are by sea, river, and air. The hot, humid climate nourishes several different kinds of jungle, among the thickest anywhere in the world, and produces thick morning mists inland and substantial cloud cover.

Surface movement is progressively difficult as one moves inland. Hills rise quickly from the coastal plains and lead to huge mountain ranges covered with thick jungle, which average 5,000 feet in height with some peaks reaching 7,000 to 8,000 feet. In the 1960s, much of the interior was unmapped, and existing maps lacked detail and precision. Borneo's long, twisting 970-mile border with Kalimantan, unmarked most of the way, ran through these uncharted sections. In some areas, no trails or tracks existed; crossing the border in these areas usually meant following a river course.

With such a long, unposted, and unpatrolled border—one immune to air reconnaissance and sparsely settled—hundreds of avenues for incursions into the heart of northern Borneo beckoned to the Indonesians. Moreover, geography

permitted the Indonesians to plan and support these incursions in secrecy and safety since the British prohibited cross-border operations and overflights until late in the war.

## *Comparison of the Emergency and the Confrontation*

Was the Confrontation simply a reenactment of the Emergency—the acting out of the same play but on a different stage? Or were the two conflicts unrelated to each other, requiring different methods, means, and concepts? The answer evidently lies somewhere between these views. Striking similarities and important differences existed between the two struggles.

The Confrontation did resemble the Emergency in a number of ways. To begin with, the British used the same basic organizational approach in both situations. As overall director of operations, Major General Walker, in the Confrontation, had broad powers to command not only the army forces committed to him but also the navy and air forces in the theater. He also worked closely with the civil authorities and police in each of the areas, establishing joint headquarters down to brigade and battalion level. This paralleled the earlier British experience in Malaya.

Here, however, a major difference between the two conflicts arises. As high commissioner, General Templer, in Malaya, had directed all civil and military activities. He headed both the civil government and the armed forces. In Borneo, Walker's powers were more circumscribed, since he did not represent the British Crown. Walker, instead of being in charge of the territory, provided only military assistance to the existing governments. The sultanate of Brunei was independent; thus, Walker always had to respond to the sultan as Brunei's head of state. Moreover, because Sarawak and Sabah were administered separately, Walker had to deal with two separate administrations and police forces, each with its own chain of command. As a result, Walker was forced to rely more on cooperation and persuasion than had Templer. When Sarawak and Sabah joined Malaysia in 1965, Walker's situation became even more complex, as he now had to serve a new master in Kuala Lumpur.

The British military forces in Borneo, however, were similar to those used in Malaya. In both locations, light infantry troops formed the core of the committed forces; they were also again organized on an area basis, although the expanse of Borneo required even more decentralization in operations. Troops in Borneo also required the same kinds of skills and tactics as those in Malaya. Furthermore, good, timely intelligence was vitally important in Borneo as it had been in Malaya.

Recognizing that the Confrontation might continue for years, the British adopted a long-term approach to the conflict in Borneo, as they had earlier in Malaya, and resolved to outlast the Indonesians. The principal distinction between the two struggles was the limits placed on Walker's power in Borneo owing to the more complicated political structure there. Walker did, however, retain more or less absolute operational control over the army, navy, and air force elements in Borneo.

In regard to the geographical characteristics of the two territories, Borneo's terrain presented the British with more difficult military problems than had

Malaya's. The land was vaster, more sparsely settled, less economically developed, and far more impeding to surface movement. For example, less than 10 percent of the land had been cleared for agriculture or habitation.[49] Furthermore, the high mountains in Borneo had no counterpart in Malaya, and the lack of good military maps posed serious difficulties. Land navigation in Borneo also proved to be much more difficult than in Malaya. These geographical characteristics in Borneo spawned several new operational and tactical requirements: (1) the unpatrolled border produced a greater need for tactical intelligence through ground reconnaissance; (2) the scarcity of troops forced the British to rely on border tribes for information; and (3) because these Bornean border tribes were vulnerable to destabilization, the hearts and minds of the tribesmen had to be influenced positively.

The threat also differed greatly in Borneo from that in Malaya. In Malaya, the Communist terrorists had no real sanctuaries; they had to remain in the country to accomplish their goals. In Borneo, the threat was external, and the Indonesians did have sanctuaries. They could move laterally, attack anywhere across the 970-mile border between Kalimantan and northern Borneo, and retire to safety back in their own territory if the British forces failed to intercept them. Furthermore, the Indonesians operated in larger groups and were better armed, better trained, and healthier than the Communist terrorists in Malaysia. Some of the Indonesians had even been trained in earlier years at the Jungle Warfare School. Furthermore, some of the raiding parties came from elite airborne battalions. Finally, the Indonesians were more offensive minded. When ambushed or intercepted, they counterattacked. There were no surrendered or captured personnel in Borneo. The enemy in Borneo fought tenaciously and craftily, showing a high level of jungle craft and tactical skill.[50]

## *Operational Concepts*

The British could have made no better choice than Major General Walter Walker as director of operations in North Borneo. Walker's experience and intellect fitted him perfectly for the position. A veteran of the Burma campaign in World War II, first director of the Jungle Warfare School, battalion and brigade commander of Gurkhas in Malaya, Walker had no doubts whatsoever about his fitness to command in Borneo. Described as "the greatest jungle fighter of his time," Walker acknowledged his indebtedness to the examples set by his predecessors, particularly Templer.[51]

From the time his airplane landed in Borneo, Walker knew how he wanted to meet the crisis. His goal was to prevent the escalation of the Brunei revolt and the early Indonesian-sponsored raids into an open war à la Vietnam. To attain this goal, he reasoned that he had to win the opening rounds of the Confrontation and maintain this ascendancy over a potentially long period of time. He concluded, therefore, that the British forces he commanded had to meet each incursion with extreme violence, demonstrating that the smallest violation of the border would result in swift, merciless retaliation against any enemy forces. From this core idea sprang one of the most offensively natured defensive strategies in military history.

Walker established these guiding principles for the prosecution of the war, which he called "ingredients for success":

- Unified operations (i.e., jointmanship).
- Timely and accurate intelligence.
- Speed, mobility, and flexibility of the security forces.
- Security of bases.
- Domination of the jungle.
- Winning hearts and minds.[52]

## *Unified Operations*

Walker believed that the joint organization that he established was indispensable to the successful prosecution of the war. When he arrived in Borneo, he found that the British Army and the Royal Air Force (RAF) occupied widely separated headquarters, and the Royal Navy had no permanent representative ashore. The joint headquarters that he quickly established in one building set the pattern for all lower levels of operation.

Walker's influence on unified operations went well beyond the creation of a joint headquarters. As director of operations, he exercised his full authority to insist that the navy and RAF commanders subordinate their ideas about the proper employment of their forces to his own operational concept. Thus,

Jungle patrol in Brunei

*Courtesy of the Infantryman*

he required the Fleet Air Arm to base its helicopters ashore, and he used the commando ships as ferries to and from Singapore and for local logistical support, not as assault ships. Likewise, he forced the RAF to relax its formal procedures and emphasis on centralized operations. Furthermore, he insisted that it take some risks in the jungle and that they learn new techniques, such as insertion of patrols into the jungle by helicopters using ropes.[53] In this manner, Walker trained the services to approach the war as a team, giving up their parochial viewpoints.

Walker never forgot that military forces in little wars like the Confrontation, as in big wars, existed to support political goals. Though he had no formal authority over the civil and police bureaucracies, he brought them into his joint headquarters and used his influence to obtain their cooperation. He sought also to win their confidence through tactical successes and effective civic actions in the border regions. The British did experience some problems with the police in Sarawak and Sabah.[54] Nevertheless, a spirit of cooperation generally prevailed between the civil, police, and military arms.

## *The Domination of the Jungle*

Tactically, the most important of Walker's six principles was his order to the infantry to dominate the jungle. This principle grew out of Walker's attitude of offensiveness. The principle was tied inextricably to the idea that every Indonesian incursion would be met with violence. Dominating the jungle meant making the jungle one's home for weeks on end. It meant, in some respects, living like a guerrilla and using one's primitive instincts and senses—becoming a jungle creature hunting for its prey. More than anything else, domination of the jungle required a frame of mind that accepted the rigors and dangers of life in the jungle and determined, at the same time, that the jungle could be used to one's advantage. The jungle was to belong to the British, not to the enemy—that was the theme.

Operationally, Walker demanded that the British maintain a continuous, shifting presence along the entire border through constant patrolling. In this way, the British aimed—primarily through the means of ambushes—to create a strong sense of insecurity in the minds of the enemy, a sense that by crossing the border they were putting themselves in great peril. Perhaps the Indonesians might not be intercepted on the way in, but once their presence was detected, they knew that the British infantry would doggedly pursue them every step of the way thereafter. The enemy would be given no respite, no chance to relax. In this manner, through sacrificial effort, the British would maintain ceaseless pressure and relentless pursuit of the foe.

The history of the Confrontation is replete with examples of how Indonesian raiding parties, over weeks, were hunted down to the last man. For example, in December 1963, a 128-man enemy force raided Kalabakan in Sabah. Repulsed by the local forces, the Indonesians lingered before returning to Kalimantan. In a flash, the 1st Battalion, 10th Gurkha Rifles, had cut them off and begun pursuit. By the first of March, the Gurkhas killed or captured 96 of the 128 enemy soldiers.[55] In late 1963, in Sarawak, after another failed raid at Song, the Gurkhas harried the Indonesians for a month

as they tried to withdraw.[56] Few enemy hit-and-run sorties recovered to their own areas without suffering significant casualties. Retaliation by the British could not be avoided.

Dominating the jungle boiled down to the question of who would be the most aggressive, the most dangerous, the most ruthless—the British or the Indonesians. It was a contest for mastery of the jungle. In the end, the British showed more cunning, guile, craft, discipline, and sacrifice than did the Indonesians, so they beat them in the deadly game of jungle ambush and retaliation.

## *Speed, Mobility, and Flexibility*

Walker's operational concept dictated that his forces respond immediately to every hostile enemy action. Forward deployment of his forces and decentralization along the border established the framework for an immediate, flexible reaction. Unfortunately, Walker never had enough infantry forces to do anything but maintain the thinnest of screens.

Brigade frontages were enormous, varying from 81 miles in the most threatened area, to 442 miles in another. Within a brigade, individual battalions assumed responsibility for vast areas. In 1964, for example, the 1st Battalion, Royal Leicestershire Regiment, covered a front longer than that of the British Army of the Rhine and an area the size of Wales. Moreover, platoons and detachments were as much as 100 miles from any permanent base. Table 5 below shows the distance in miles between individual elements and the battalion headquarters.[57]

Effective domination of the jungle, in the view of such extreme decentralization, depended, among other things, on the capability of forces to react rapidly to the discovery of the enemy. Clearly, dominating the jungle where the enemy was not had little value. The light infantry had to get to where the enemy was before he could retreat and escape. The solution to this problem was to obtain early warning of the enemy and to achieve speed, mobility, and flexibility in his pursuit. The latter principle was fulfilled, above all, by the use of helicopters.

The use of helicopters permitted Walker to implement his plan of forward deployment. The numerous permanent jungle bases constructed within a few kilometers of the border at various widely separated points along its length

Table 5. The Disposition of the 1st Battalion, Leicestershire Regiment, 1964

| *Unit* | *Location* | *Distance from HQ* |
|---|---|---|
| A Company | Tawau (Sabah) | 250 |
| B Company | Bangar | 20 |
| C Company | Lawas | 85 |
| 5th Platoon | Ba Kelalan | 80 |
| 9th Platoon | Long Pasia | 70 |
| 10th Platoon | Pensiangan | 100 |
| 11th Platoon | Sepulot | 100 |

relied exclusively on the air line of communication. All supplies except water arrived by helicopters or airdrops. The cargo was sometimes quite unusual. An Australian company commander having trouble with rats requested "cats, pussy, 12" and got them.[58]

The most important contribution of the helicopters was the tactical mobility that they provided. Initial skirmishes with the enemy had shown that sending a force on foot to a hot spot simply took too long: by the time the British infantry arrived, the enemy had disappeared. Through the use of helicopters, however, a relief or ambush force could be in place in a matter of minutes. Moreover, these forces could be emplaced in several places, cutting off the enemy regardless of his direction of flight.

The basic procedure for immediate reaction was called the Step-Up Drill. To effect this drill, each battalion maintained an on-call force in combat readiness adjacent to a pick-up zone. Whenever an Indonesian force was spotted, this on-call force, alerted by radio, mounted its transports and promptly flew in to the nearest landing zone. The SAS conducted this drill for village headmen in remote areas to demonstrate to them that even though no large troop unit had bases nearby, a substantial force could be flown in to protect their villages in mere minutes.[59]

New techniques enhanced these rapid moves. For example, in March 1965, a 150-man Indonesian company attacked the platoon manning the base of B Company, 2d Battalion, The Parachute Regiment. Though supported by engineers and rocket launchers, the attack failed. The British followed up on the attack almost immediately. Three platoons with five days' rations roped down from helicopters into the jungle behind the enemy to set up ambushes, and A Company was flown in to the B Company base to pursue directly. In this case, the surviving Indonesians escaped without further losses; still, the methods of immediate reaction were sound.[60]

In another case, the enemy was not so lucky. When a fifty-man element penetrated the frontier in August 1966, an entire battalion was deployed to round them up. Operating in platoon packets over about 200 miles of territory, the battalion annihilated the enemy force to the last man in a month's time.

Naturally aircraft could be used to transport troops to anywhere within their range. Consequently, a battalion did not have to rely on its own resources to meet a threat. A neighboring battalion might provide the reaction force. If a reaction force stayed out for an extended period of time, it was resupplied by air.

The British took the burden off the helicopter force by building jungle airstrips for light aircraft, such as the Beaver, which were used to transport troops and cargo. The British also cleared several hundred loading zones along the frontier, which allowed them easy entry to hot spots. (Local natives often helped clear these loading zones under direction of the light infantry or the SAS.) Any of these loading zones could also be used to pick up patrols and evacuate casualties.

The supporting helicopter squadrons came from the RAF and the Fleet Air Arm. Some of the unit commanders hesitated initially about deploying helicopters so far forward, but as the methods prescribed by Walker and his

subordinates proved effective, commanders became enthusiastic supporters. Nonetheless, the weather often restricted operations, and air navigation was difficult. Furthermore, it was easy for pilots to get lost, unless they had experience in the area of operations. Through necessity, pilots navigated primarily by terrain association and dead reckoning (that is, by using timed flights at fixed speeds along fixed headings). Few in number, the helicopters were controlled centrally but deployed widely.

The helicopter force was of utmost importance to operations. Walker's estimate of their value is evident from his statement that an infantry battalion with ten helicopters was worth more than a brigade on foot.[61] Even more telling was his refusal to accept more infantry units unless he also received an increase in helicopters. The use of helicopters gave the British an advantage in tactical mobility while neutralizing, to a certain degree, the Indonesians' freedom of maneuver once they crossed the frontier. In summary, through their adroit use of helicopters, the British defeated the enemy even though they were outnumbered by him and on the defensive.

### *Security of Bases*

Whether the Brunei revolt would develop into a larger, wide-scale insurrection was unclear at the beginning of the insurrection. One estimate concluded that there were 60,000 potential guerrillas in North Borneo.[62] Because of this threat and Walker's principle that all military and police facilities had to be able to protect themselves wherever they were, potentially every soldier and policeman might become involved in the defense of their garrisons. Walker's concern proved well founded when during the first year of the war, the Indonesian-supported TNKU guerrillas attacked a number of installations deep inside the frontier. The seriousness of this threat diminished, however, as the British increased the size and training of the police force and as the guerrilla force faded away. From 1964 to 1966, the forward jungle bases and border villages were most threatened by Indonesian regular forces, not the interior garrisons.

To meet this threat at its source, the border, Major General Walker directed the construction of jungle bases well forward. These bases, it was hoped, would deny the enemy access to the interior of North Borneo and provide the British with a variety of advantages. They functioned primarily as widely separated secure havens for the men conducting constant patrolling in the frontier zone and afforded a place for returning patrols to rest, relax, eat hot food, and take hot showers. In addition, the bases protected nearby villages by virtue of their proximity. They also served as a focal point for the collection of intelligence from the local natives. Furthermore, units based in these jungle forts carried out civic-action programs in nearby villages. The bases were never meant to serve as static defense forts; that kind of strategy was doomed to failure.

The organization of jungle bases varied somewhat, but it normally included an infantry company, a mortar detachment, a landing zone, an artillery section of one or two guns, and living space for extra forces if needed. Occasionally, the base included a helicopter detachment as well. The base was manned by

one platoon on a rotating basis; the other three platoons stayed in the jungle hunting the enemy. Walker and his subordinate commanders refused to let the need to defend the base compromise the order to dominate the jungle.

The British made no attempts to hide the forts. Constructed on high ground and fortified with trenches, sandbag bunkers, wire, punji stakes, claymore mines, and overhead cover, the forts were formidable positions. The primary defensive weapon system was the tripod-mounted medium machine gun, supported by mortars and, when on hand, a 105-mm gun in a direct-fire role. The vegetation around the perimeter was cleared to improve fields of fire, and some forts put up lights for illumination at night. Sentry dogs enhanced early warning of enemy approach. The Indonesians tried several times to destroy some of these bases but never succeeded.

### *Timely and Accurate Intelligence*

Early warning was critical to the success of British operations as they have been described above. Indeed, without early warning of Indonesian intrusions, the entire defensive scheme designed by Walker could only fail. Unfortunately, the requisite intelligence infrastructure to support early warning did not exist. The several police forces that could have provided intelligence were small, and there was no Special Branch. Furthermore, in the frontier areas where the greatest threat existed, police posts and villages were separated by tens of miles of daunting terrain. Consequently, information regarding the Indonesians came from two primary sources: the border tribes and the armed forces themselves.

The border tribes possessed an immense potential for intelligence collection. Adept in the jungle, they easily concealed themselves from the British and the Indonesians. Their hunting forays often brought them into contact with enemy patrols. Moreover, many had relatives or trading partners in Kalimantan, so they had valid reasons for crossing the border. However, obtaining information from the border tribes depended on the ability of the army to protect them from Indonesian raids. Isolated in their village longhouses, the highland aborigines traditionally were favorably disposed toward the British because of the peaceful and beneficial colonial heritage. However, experience proved that they would not help the British unless they were sure of protection. In several instances, the local natives were aware of cross-border movements by the Indonesians, but they did not notify the British forces or the police because they feared retaliation.

As a result, the British devoted a great deal of effort to convincing the border tribes that they could protect them. To secure native confidence, British security forces maintained a frequent and visible presence. Special Air Service patrols, in particular, lived in many of the isolated villages, where they endeavored, through staged Step-up Drills and their own fearless patrolling, to win the trust of the people. If a village was known to be threatened or victimized, the British immediately sent a formation to its aid. In the process, they paid proper respect to the village headmen by listening to their concerns, responding to their requests, and visiting their longhouses frequently. Villagers and headmen received advice and support on their own self-defense as well.

The British were also exceedingly careful in their own operations not to endanger civilians. The procedures established for calling for close air or artillery support, for example, had tight restrictions to prevent civilian casualties. In addition, the British avoided pitched battles for the control of villages; whenever possible, they confronted the enemy before he reached target areas. The security forces were amazingly successful in this regard. From 1965 to early 1966, the British defeated more than 200 separate enemy operations. Only four of these Indonesian raids penetrated to within mortar range of their objectives.[63]

The Special Air Service, using the skill and daring of RAF and navy crews

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The campaign to win the hearts and minds of the people also contributed to the willingness of the people to come forward with information. Gradually these measures persuaded the border people that their security would be improved through their participation with the British as sources of information.

Some of the members of the frontier tribes went beyond this passive participation. These men were the Border Scouts, an irregular force numbering about 1,500. Initially conceived as a paramilitary self-defense force, an idea that did not work, the scouts were turned instead to reconnaissance and intelligence—roles for which they were well suited. The scouts received fundamental training and guidance from the infantry and SAS units with which they were associated. Moving freely between villages and across the border, the scouts collected information on the locations and movements of Indonesian units and their armament, size, and disposition. They reported this invaluable information back to the armed forces, which were then able to plan and act accordingly. The raising and use of the Border Scouts helped to create that fine intelligence mesh so necessary to rapid reaction by the British.

The British also relied on their own forces to provide intelligence—their principal instrument being the long-range reconnaissance patrol (LRRP). During the conflict, there existed a mild debate within the army concerning who should conduct long-range patrols, the light infantry battalions or the Special Air Service. Operations demonstrated that both could be successful but that only the most experienced and able troops should be employed in this task.

All of the British, Gurkha, and Commonwealth infantry battalions sent to Borneo formed their own LRRPs. These patrols varied in size but generally operated in small groups. They used local guides (Border Scouts) and stayed in the jungle for weeks, resupplying by air and operating as much as 120 miles from base. The primary mission of these LRRPs was to collect information on terrain, local conditions, routes and trails, and enemy locations, movements, and activities. In certain situations, notably self-defense, they were permitted to engage in offensive action. Generally, however, they scrupulously avoided detection, denying themselves the pleasure of hitting a fat target in order to keep the information flowing into headquarters. The patrols operated in the most remote areas. Even if they did not make contact with the enemy, the information that they collected on the terrain had great value.

Conducting such long-range reconnaissance undoubtedly was the most demanding task performed by the light infantry in Borneo. Deep in largely uncharted territory, dependent on an air lifeline, miles from the nearest help, the patrol members of the LRRPs had to be the most stable and capable of men. Their task required the highest standard of jungle craft and strong nerves.

Lieutenant Colonel H. J. Sweeney, commander of the 1st Battalion, Royal Green Jackets (an outstanding battalion), insisted that his LRRP be composed of the best soldiers in his battalion. As shown in table 6, he prescribed the necessary characteristics of each individual and the special training that was needed.[64]

Table 6. Necessary Characteristics and Training, 1st Battalion, Royal Green Jackets

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. First-class shot on all weapons | 1. Jungle marching, carrying radios and four days' rations |
| 2. Tough and resilient | 2. Watermanship; operation of outboard motors |
| 3. Above-average intelligence | 3. Living in the jungle for long periods of time |
| 4. Well-balanced infantry skills | 4. Use of radios and Morse code |
| | 5. Colloquial Malay |
| | 6. First aid |

Particularly noteworthy are the last two areas included in their suggested training: language skills and first aid. The LRRPs often visited remote villages to obtain information, demonstrate British presence, and establish friendly relations. It was essential that all, or some of the group, be able to speak the language. The group members also had to be able to minister to their own and their comrades' wounds and illnesses and the maladies of the aborigines whom they visited. Sharing British medical aid with the tribesmen built strong bonds of friendship and trust.

While the many infantry battalions in Borneo sent out their own LRRPs and directed significant intelligence collection activities through Border Scouts, village visits, consultation with police, and local patrolling, most of the deep patrolling was performed by the SAS. The 22d SAS Regiment entered the Confrontation soon after the Brunei revolt. Initially, a danger existed that the SAS might be used in a reserve strike role. However, the SAS commander, Lieutenant Colonel John Woodhouse, convinced Major General Walker that the SAS should be Walker's "eyes and ears." He insisted that Walker use them "to establish a forward deployed intelligence/communication net right in the jungle with the natives near the border."[65] While the SAS is a very specialized form of light infantry—high above the norm in terms of training, skills, and capabilities—it embodies, in many respects, the high standards to which all light infantry units should aspire. For this reason, its operations in Borneo should be examined.

## *The Special Air Service*

After honorable service in World War II, the SAS had been resurrected for the Malayan Emergency, during which it pioneered the roles and tasks it was later to assume in Borneo.[66] In Borneo, it was employed on the outer edge of the British defenses to act as a trip wire in providing early warning of Indonesian incursions. Its role was entirely one of watching and reporting. Only in rare situations did the SAS engage in offensive actions during the first months of the Confrontation.

With Walker's blessings, Woodhouse deployed his SAS squadrons in four-man teams across the entire frontage. Each team moved into a native village for a fixed four-month tour. Sharing the dangers and the communal life of

these frontier aborigines, the SAS teams ate, worked, and slept with them, winning their friendship and respect. Speaking the local language, these SAS soldiers were able to share their technical skills—especially medical help—with their hosts. By winning the hearts and minds of the aborigines, a fundamental ingredient in the SAS repertoire, they were able to rely on the villagers for information and cooperation in the fight against the Indonesians.

Using the local village as their base and moving from one village to the next, the SAS painstakingly reconnoitered the entire border. Thus, one of their earliest contributions to infantry operations was the compilation of terrain descriptions and sketch maps for these unmapped areas. The teams remained in the same general area during these exacting four-month tours in order to become thoroughly familiar with it. SAS squadron commanders each went forward on foot to personally reconnoiter the territory in which their teams operated. One officer walked almost the whole 970-mile border.[67] Later in the war, as the infantry's forward presence increased in size and skill, the SAS teams moved across the border to observe the enemy and to perform terrain reconnaissance. These tension-filled cross-border reconnaissance patrols then became the norm for the SAS.

Using four-man teams in this manner, with assistance from local Border Scouts, the SAS left few gaps through which the enemy might slip unnoticed. The SAS maintained close liaison with the infantry, often by assigning their wounded and ill as liaison officers. When they detected enemy movement, they reported immediately to the infantry, who then reacted with a Step-Up Drill to intercept the Indonesians. So effective was the SAS in providing early warning that Major General Walker remarked that "I regard 70 troopers of the SAS (one squadron) as being as valuable to me as 700 infantry in the role of hearts and minds, border surveillance, early warning, stay behind, and eyes and ears with a sting."[68]

The SAS succeeded because they possessed extraordinarily high levels of combat skills and field craft, levels rarely reached by even the best light infantrymen. The three most important skills have already been cited: radio communications, first aid (the equal of the average medic), and language. Extraordinarily fit, these specialists practiced marksmanship and quick fire with a dozen different kinds of weapons. They also trained in parachuting (into water and trees), abseiling, demolitions, booby traps, survival, and the use of all kinds of vehicles and water craft.

The SAS approached the standards of the aborigines in jungle craft and tracking. Just plodding along through the jungle was not enough. Endurance was essential for SAS patrols, along with meticulous attention to detail. Isolated and exposed, under constant nervous stress from the danger of detection, the SAS teams had to be keen observers, anticipating, making minute decisions, choosing the best routes, eking out their rations, and measuring options in the event of an emergency. As much as possible, they left no indications of their own passing or presence. Moving silently through the bush, the SAS strained to recognize the signs of the enemy: urine stains, bruised moss, machete marks, cigarette papers, and footprints under leaves or along river banks.

As navigators, the SAS was unequaled. Its methods depended on close scrutiny of aerial photographs, memorization of recognizable terrain, detailed note taking when on the move, and strict measurement of distances and bearings. The SAS was able to call helicopters to within several hundred meters of its positions for resupply or evacuation despite having been on the march for a week or more in unknown territory.[69]

The SAS adhered rigorously to a number of field-proven SOPs. For example, the contents of rucksacks were regulated according to men's specialities (radio operators, medics, etc.) and were weighed to ensure they did not exceed fifty pounds. Personal loads were also spelled out for each operation, as shown below in the preparations made by a four-man patrol led by Captain England:

> Secrecy, security, self-sufficiency, and deniability were England's watchword in making his plan, which began with what each man was to carry and where, in minute detail. In his hand he would carry his self-loading rifle with full magazine. On his person would be his escape compass, 100 Malay dollars sewn into his clothing for soliciting help in emergency, field dressings, morphine, plasters, torch, notebook and pencil, map (never to be marked with his true position, but a fictitious track entirely in Sabah to imply a genuine navigational error), loo-paper, matches, knife, watch, and wrist compass for those lucky enough to own one. On his belt would be his compass, 'parang' (machete), two full magazines, water-bottle, mug, sterilizing tablets, two days' rations in his mess tin, spoon, cooking stove with hexamine fuel tablets, more matches, paludrine (malaria pills taken daily), wire saw, insect repellent, rifle cleaning kit, and a hand grenade.
>
> The bergen's contents varied from man to man. Hoe was the signaller, carrying the radio with its spare battery, aerial and codes, and the Sarbe (radio beacon), which had at last been issued. Those were heavy items, so most of his food was shared around the others, leaving him with his spare shirt, trousers, socks, boots, poncho, sleeping-bag of parachute silk, nylon cord for contingencies, and book for beguiling the hours when not on observation duty, though not during the eleven-hour nights when the escape would have been most welcome; a candle on a sharpened stake conveniently positioned at the hammock-side was a luxury of the past, for no lights or stake-sharpening would be permitted now. Condie's extra load was the medical pack, containing surgical scissors, forceps, thermometer, syringe and needles, scalpel blades, suture needles and thread, extra morphine syrettes, sterile water, assorted plasters and bandages, and a comprehensive pharmacy. England and Manbahadur took the binoculars, camera, and two large water-bags. The latter were carried empty; on passing a stream all would replenish their personal bottles and drink their fill—and more, for one can never have too much in the tropics, while too little causes heatstroke which can kill as readily as hypothermia. A night-stop near a stream would not be safe and it was then that plenty of water was needed for brewing, soaking dehydrated foods, cooking and washing-up. The supply was carried up in one load and the waterpoint never used again. Rations were keenly debated and whittled down, for it would surely be acceptable to lose weight for a maximum of twelve days rather than carry an incapacitating and tiring load.[70]

The SAS also maintained SOPs for ambushes, immediate actions, and escapes and evasions. However, it showed proper flexibility in its willingness to change these SOPs when circumstances or experience showed that change was needed. In the words of one SAS veteran, the unit was a great "finger-poking regiment," meaning that each patrol or operation, no matter how successful, was subjected to intense examination by its participants and other SAS members in order to determine in detail how it might have been done better.[71]



Sergeant "Gipsy" Smith's hydroelectric generator at Talinbakus, Sabah

The SAS in Borneo was characterized by the highest standards of self-discipline and field craft, resistance to mental stress, relentless pursuit of excellence in its operations, and dogged perseverance in going one step further than required. The SAS exhibited great confidence in itself.

## *Winning Hearts and Minds*

During the Vietnam War, the concept of winning the hearts and minds of the inhabitants of a country threatened by an insurgency became very much a part of the American vocabulary. However, it was the British who originated this concept in Malaya and then implemented it to near perfection in Borneo. That winning the hearts and minds of the people in Borneo implied maintaining their security is clear. The British accomplished this task through constant patrolling, deterring enemy attacks, immediate reaction, direct help, and assistance in village self-defense.

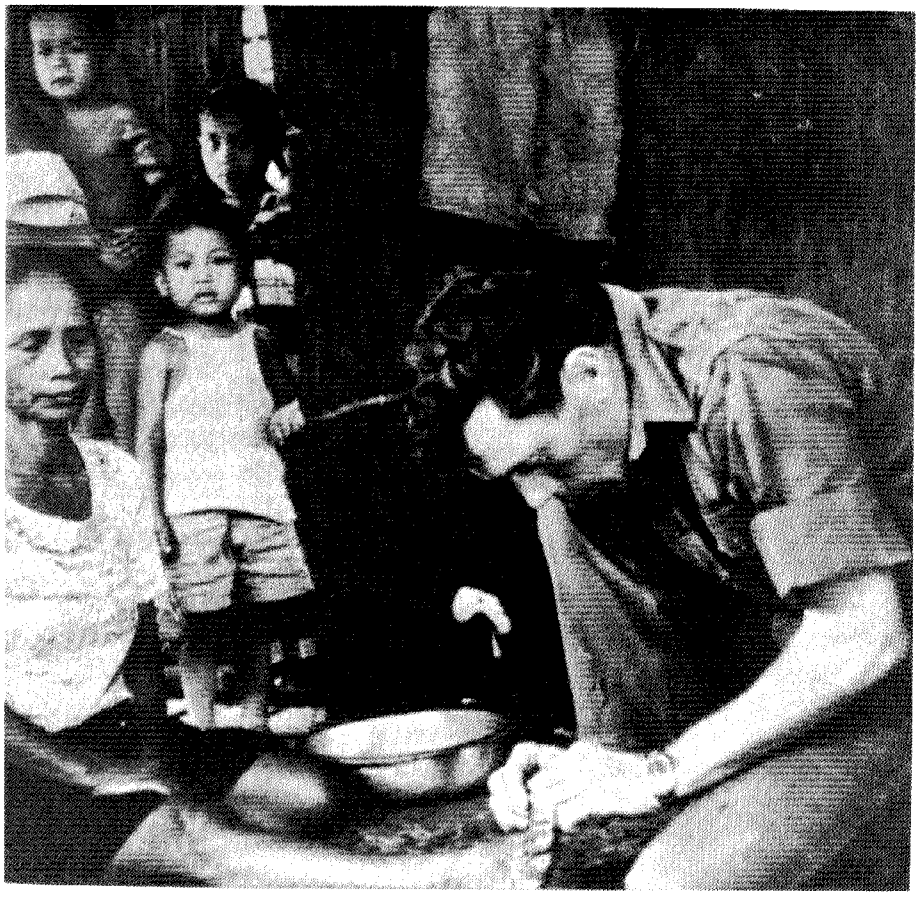
Although the British soldiers were technologically superior to the Bornean natives and far more sophisticated and educated, they took care to treat the people with respect in order to win their cooperation. They did not adopt the attitude of a conquering or occupying army. They approached the people as equals and meted out fair, kind treatment in all matters of mutual interest. In particular, the village headmen were given the honors befitting their positions. Commanders did not dictate to the people; they consulted with them and explained their operations and policies. Moreover, soldiers observed local customs and adhered to rigorous guidelines for behavior when in contact with the natives.

Officers and soldiers also showed the natives respect by learning the local language (a lesson often lost on the U.S. Army even today). The SAS went one step further by actually living with the villagers, eating their food, entering into their celebrations, and making real friendships. By using the villagers' language and by sharing their life-style, the British made a favorable impression on the natives.

The most important service provided by the army to the Bornean tribesmen was medical aid. No other act of aid given to the tribesmen by the British compared to that of mending a broken limb or administering the medicine that cured a dangerous disease or corrected a long-standing illness. All four-man SAS teams included a man with extensive medical training for just this purpose. Infantry medics performed similar services on every visit to a village or jungle longhouse.

Finally, the infantry participated in many civic-action programs, such as skill training, local construction, improvements in local agriculture and water supply, or arranging the delivery of needed materials. The motive behind such programs was to foster self-sufficiency in the natives. Soldiers guided, advised, and assisted the villagers; they did not do the work for them.

"Winning the hearts and minds": a medic at work



The result of these efforts was apparent. The implementation of the principle of winning hearts and minds in Borneo was influential in obtaining the concrete assistance provided by the people to the army in the forms of information and early warning, in the natives' willing help in building landing zones and clearing trails, in the performance of the villagers as guides, and in the formation of the tribesmen into the essential Border Scouts. The British were fortunate in that their colonial heritage and Malayan experience enabled them to be sensitive to the well-being and attitudes of the people and to capitalize on their good will.

## *Claret Operations*

During the first twenty months of the Confrontation, the political and military situation in Borneo led the British government to dictate severe restrictions on the use of force against the enemy, primarily to keep the conflict from escalating and to demonstrate clearly that the Indonesians were the aggressor. However, by September 1964, Walker's forces had successfully stabilized the situation. The security forces on the frontier had proved to be more than a match for the Indonesians, while the British air and sea forces discouraged enemy strikes in those quarters. At this juncture, Walker was able to secure permission to mount some discreet cross-border operations called Claret operations.

The Claret operations had a specific goal—the creation of a defensive attitude in the minds of the enemy. Through a series of shallow, sharp, and violent raids into Kalimantan, Walker hoped to put the Indonesians off-balance and to intensify their feelings of uncertainty. Previously, the enemy had had every reason to feel safe and secure as long as it stayed on its side of the border. Claret operations were designed to erase that sense of security and replace it with a feeling of uneasiness. Walker believed that well-placed pinpricks could make the whole enemy body tremble. The operations were to receive no publicity because of their sensitivity. Claret operations were regulated by strict guidelines known as the "Golden Rules":

1. Major General Walker was to approve all "Claret" raids personally.

2. Only trained and tested troops could be used. No troops in their first tour of duty were to participate.

3. Depth of penetration was to be limited.

4. All attacks were to have the specific aim of deterring enemy offensive action and must never be in retaliation or simply to cause casualties.

5. No operation requiring close air support could be undertaken. Helicopters were not permitted to enter enemy airspace except in dire emergency (by approval of the director of operations).

6. Each operation must be planned with a sand table and rehearsed for at least two weeks.

7. Absolute operations security was necessary. Full cover plans must be made and all nonessential items traceable to the British forces must be left behind (including, for example, dog tags).

8. On no account must any soldier be captured either alive or dead by the enemy.[72]

The first Claret raids were shallow affairs carried out by superb Gurkha troops and the SAS. The SAS participated in the raids since it knew better where the Indonesians were and could guide the Gurkha units to their objectives. The SAS, permitted to run its own four-man raids, was gleeful about the chance to do something other than "watching and counting." The SAS nicknamed itself "The Tiptoe Boys" because of its ability to strike the enemy hard and slip away, leaving only empty space to receive the enemy counterattack.[73]

Infantry raids still assumed larger proportions (up to company size) than SAS raids, but they remained small enough to avoid precipitating a violent Indonesian response. As the risks were great, so were the precautions: "no rifleman was allowed to eat, smoke, or unscrew his water bottle without his platoon commander's permission. At night, sentries checked any man who snored or talked in his sleep. Whenever the company was on the move, a reconnaissance section led the way, their packs carried by the men behind."[74]

Appearing ghost like out of the jungle, these parties of light infantrymen usually achieved complete surprise. After conducting a trail or river ambush or an early-morning attack on an Indonesian border post-forward base, the Gurkhas immediately returned to the friendly side of the border. Pursuing Indonesians had to take care to avoid being caught in an ambush.

As time passed, more and more of the experienced infantry battalions were given permission to participate in Claret operations. Walker also increased the depth of penetration from 5,000 yards to 20,000 yards. Ultimately, the operations accomplished their goal: the frequency of enemy offensive actions in Borneo fell off as the Indonesians became preoccupied with protecting themselves. Throughout the war, the British never acknowledged their raids into Kalimantan territory. The Indonesians, on their part, were embarrassed too much by the raids to make a political issue of them.

## *Tactical Issues*

The tactics, combat support, and individual skills required by the British in Borneo resembled those practiced by their light infantry in Malaya. Nevertheless, because three years had elapsed since the struggle in Malaya, the troops initially deployed to Borneo required extensive acclimatization to the jungle climate and retraining in jungle warfare. As in Malaya, infantry units received their training at the Jungle Warfare School, where they rapidly reacquired the necessary skills.

Significant differences did exist, however, between the tactical style of operations used by the British in Borneo and that in Malaya. Owing to the larger size of the threat in Borneo (the Indonesians rarely moved in groups smaller than a platoon), the British infantry generally operated more at the platoon level than at the squad level. In addition, because the enemy fought more tenaciously in Borneo, the British devoted more attention to conservation of ammunition. Isolated patrols could not afford to run out.

Light infantry attacks in Borneo most often took the form of ambushes. These ambushes, as in Malaya, lasted for long periods of time. One infantry unit, for example, maintained an ambush in waist-to-shoulder-deep water for

three days, rotating the men on the ambush site every ninety minutes.[75] In Borneo, the infantry conducted more river ambushes than they had in Malaya. The sparse settlement in Borneo also permitted the British to set up remote ambushes using claymores and other mines—ambushes that were self-detonated by the victims. Occasionally, these mines were triggered by animals. However, even if the Indonesians did not fall victim to these remote ambushes, their nondetonation informed the British that no enemy patrol had passed that way.

Close-air and artillery support were used more widely in Borneo than in Malaya, mainly because the Indonesians presented better targets. To support local patrolling, 105-mm howitzers were deployed into jungle bases singly and in pairs. Using these widely separated pieces was not easy, however, because of the difficulty in controlling indirect fires. Infantry NCOs had to be proficient in calling for fires, since they seldom had forward observers along. Similarly, each gun section had to have the capability to compute firing data. In addition, a special fire-control net was established. In view of the extraordinary requirements of the situation, the artillery command in Borneo published special, area-specific SOPs.[76] The RAF conducted no bombing operations in Borneo.

## *Logistics*

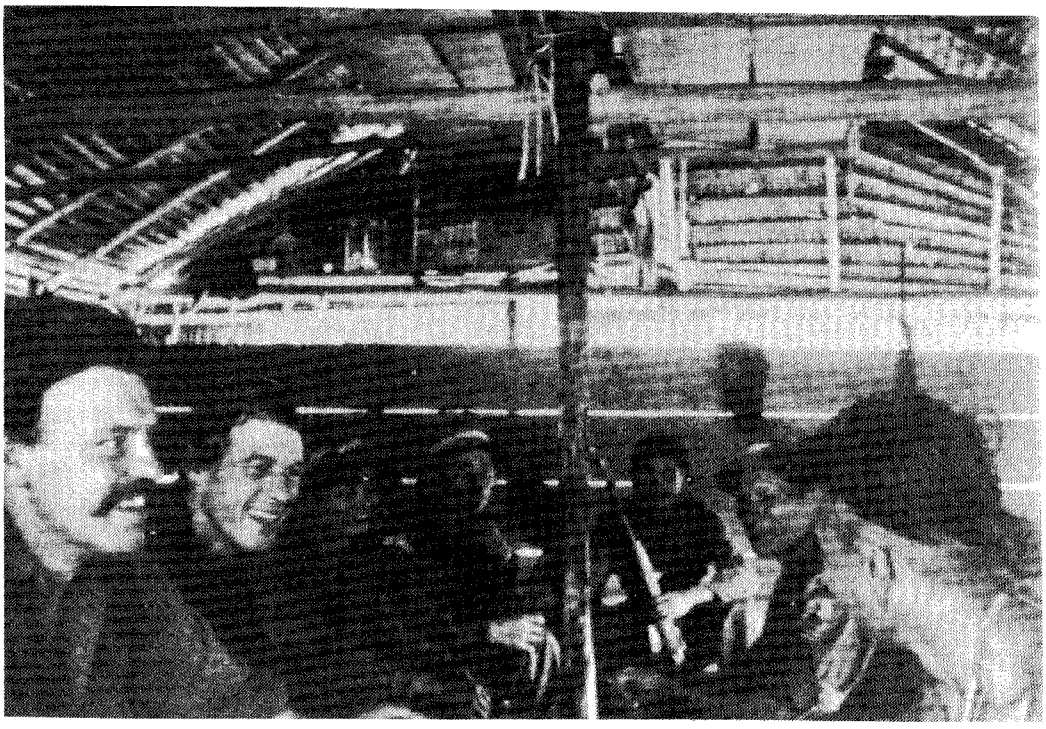
The greater difficulty of the terrain, the lack of a decent road net, the wider decentralization of forces, and the improvements in helicopter technology and techniques influenced the British to provide 90 percent of their logistic effort in Borneo by air. The British also employed watercraft in resupplying units. The Hovercraft, in particular, was put to good use, carrying both troops and cargo via inland waterways. Watercraft, unlike helicopters, could also operate at night.[77]

Owing to its precarious situation, the SAS supplied itself by placing caches here and there for emergency use. It also supplemented its light rations with jungle foods such as fruits, bamboo shoots, animals, and other local fare. The jungle could have sustained the SAS completely, but such an approach would have consumed too much of its time. The standing requirement for SAS teams on patrol was to be able to vanish for two weeks without having to resurface for resupply.[78]

## *Weapons and Equipment*

The mild controversy over weapons and equipment that was generated during the Emergency grew in intensity during the Confrontation. Walker considered that none of the available standard infantry weapons was satisfactory.[79] The issue rifle (SLR) was too long and heavy for use in the jungle. Troops much preferred the AR-15, the export version of the U.S. M-16. Its lighter ammunition (5.56-mm) and high velocity seemed much better suited to their situation than the slower, 7.62-mm NATO round. Shotguns, once again, demonstrated their great utility for close fighting in heavy vegetation.[80]

The British reevaluated their use of other weapons. The aging, but highly regarded, Bren gun was in the process of being withdrawn from the inventory during the 1960s, but its replacement, a belt-fed medium machine gun was



Reprinted by permission of Arms and Armour Press

A joint planning session of SAS and cross-border scouts

deemed too heavy and too susceptible to malfunction from dirt and water. In the 1950s, the ATOM manual declared that the 2-inch mortar had no utility in the jungle; nevertheless, in Borneo, the 81-mm mortar was thought to be too heavy for patrolling, and units preferred the 2-inch mortars. Its reduced range posed no problem in the close quarters of jungle warfare.[81]

Walker complained to his suppliers that many other items of equipment weighed too much for light infantry work. He identified tactical radios, air-ground radios, jungle clothing, and rations as items requiring lightening.

## *Significance of the British Victory in Borneo*

The significance of the British victory in Borneo has been largely overlooked by analysts, doctrine writers, and military planners in the United States. The widening conflagration in Vietnam eclipsed it on the world stage at that time. Yet the British deserve praise for their accomplishments. Outnumbered by the enemy and on the defensive, suffering from significant tactical disadvantages, severely restricted by the international anticolonial climate of the 1960s, and restrained by limited national political objectives, the British Army fought a three-year and four-month-long campaign in a hostile environment, winning by virtue of their superior organization, leadership, technology, and light infantry tactics. As a case study in protracted low-intensity conflict, the Confrontation has few equals. With justice, Denis Healy, English secretary of state for defense during the war, said that "in the history books it will be recorded as one of the most efficient uses of military force in the history of the world."[82]

## *Conclusions*

The British operations in Malaya and Borneo had their own unique sets of conditions and parameters that strongly influenced the flow of events as well as the methods and techniques employed by British military forces there. One must be careful about indiscriminate identification of lessons from the operations. Nonetheless, certain tactical and strategic principles were employed in the two conflicts that characterize light infantry operations in general.

At the tactical level, the most important principle to be inferred from the British experience is that light infantrymen must be masters of their environment. In Borneo and Malaya, infantrymen had to be willing to live in the jungle under the most primitive conditions. They had to endure grueling terrain, exhaustion, heat and humidity, jungle pests, and severe mental and physical strain just to be able to get at the enemy. Moreover, they had to be more adept and capable in the jungle than their enemies. Had the Communist terrorists or the Indonesians been able to dominate the jungle rather than the British, the outcomes of the conflicts would have been far different. Indeed, Walker's maxim to his forces to "dominate the jungle" should be taken one step further: light infantry must dominate the environment whether it be jungle, mountains, or arctic wastes.

To achieve this mastery over the environment requires, above all else, a singleness of purpose, an attitude of self-reliance, and an unflinching mental discipline and self-denial. Furthermore, such domination of the environment depends on the adoption of an offensive, aggressive policy. For this reason, the light infantry in Borneo and Malaya constantly endeavored to wrest the initiative from their enemies. Walker's Claret operations are a perfect example of an offensive orientation within the context of an overall defensive strategy.

In both conflicts, the development of timely, accurate intelligence led to the success of tactical operations. This intelligence originated in large measure from the local inhabitants and the police organizations. Good intelligence appears to be an indispensable cornerstone for light infantry operations in counterinsurgency and low-intensity conflicts. The link between tactical success and the free flow of public information is undeniable.

The British record in these operations also demonstrates that regular conventional infantry (including conscripted troops) can be employed as light infantry provided that the leadership and the rank and file are given proper, extensive training. This process takes time. Commanders in Borneo testified that even after completing the Jungle Warfare School, good infantry battalions still required four months' experience in actual operations before they began to be effective.[83] Infantrymen had to be acclimatized before their tactical proficiency began to improve.

The small-unit actions of the Emergency and Confrontation placed a premium on the quality of low-level infantry leaders. The burdens of responsibility and decision making borne by the NCOs, lieutenants, and captains in these campaigns far exceeded that experienced by the same ranks in conventional large-unit operations. Because the demands placed on light infantry leaders in such operations are great, one must conclude that the abilities of such men should be commensurately high.

While leadership was crucial to British success, superior technology also played a part in their victories. But technology was never allowed to dictate the terms of the battleground. Rather, the primary theme of British combat was always to close with the enemy on the ground and defeat him with infantry and close infantry weapons. Combat support systems served to support this primary aim, but infantrymen were the decisive weapon system.

Even though light infantrymen carried the brunt of combat in Borneo, there was a limit to the physical and mental strain that could be placed on them. For this reason, SAS squadrons were restricted to four-month tours followed by rotation. Their commander, Lieutenant Colonel Woodhouse, adamantly refused to consider extensions. Beyond this time, like the earlier Chindits, the SAS teams rapidly lost their effectiveness as their physical and mental edges were worn dull. Similar policies were followed in regard to the periodic relief of infantry battalions deployed along the frontier. The situation was handled differently in Malaya. There, the return to garrison by soldiers for four- to five-days' rest before they began their next operation restored their physical strength and renewed their mental sharpness.

The actions in Malaya and Borneo paralleled each other in important respects. For example, the British adhered to a 3x3 squad organization in both conflicts. This type of organization appeared to have high value in independent squad-level actions, probably because of the flexibility that it provided. In addition, security forces in both conflicts capitalized on local resources as much as they could, the people providing them information and some direct support in the forms of guiding, tracking, scouting, and labor. The jungle provided water, cover, concealment, and food. The development of good British marksmanship in both struggles was also essential to success. Tactical accounts of the campaigns repeatedly stress this subject. Winning and surviving for infantrymen in Borneo and Malaya meant shooting first, shooting straight, and shooting to kill.

At the strategic level, the Briggs Plan and the implementation of General Walker's six principles, both of which established the framework for a successful, integrated approach to the two wars, must be given great credit. Both plans assumed a long-term national commitment would be necessary to achieve a solution. The British acknowledged from the outset that ridding the country of the threat would require years of sacrifice. An impulsive or over-hasty approach would never have worked. This attitude of perseverance seeped down to the tactical level, where the leaders and their men accepted long-term personal commitments.

Implicit in the Briggs Plan and in Walker's principles was the idea that in these kinds of wars, military operations must yield to political authority. The strategic leadership understood that achieving military victory was meaningless if it was divorced from political objectives. Thus, the directors of operations accepted what may have seemed to be illogical restrictions on their use of force, generally unaccompanied by the gnashing of teeth that was commonplace during the Vietnam War. While the directors certainly argued their own points of view, they understood that low-intensity warfare always involves politically induced, artificial restrictions on operations. They recognized

that in such situations, political actions were paramount, and military actions were only supportive. Ultimately, the military forces would leave; the political structure left behind had to be able to stand by itself.

The joint systems for directing the war effort worked well in both wars, but problems existed. In Malaya, the DWEC or SWEC solution to a problem seldom was the optimal solution. The products of compromise, DWEC and SWEC decisions were prompted first by an attempt to achieve unity among the various civil, military, and police agencies and only secondly to effect military efficiency. In Borneo, Walker and his subordinates had to contend with several police forces and civil bureaucracies that they did not control. To have their way, they had to persuade, convince, and cajole. Still, the principle that the civil, police, and military organizations had to operate hand in hand in harmony was observed. Cooperation, not competition, was the goal. Within the military services themselves, it was equally important to develop unity by having one man direct the air, army, and naval forces. In the words of one battalion commander: "If nothing else was learned in the Borneo campaign except the necessity to have a national, flexible joint organization to fight a common battle, then the three years along the border will not have been wasted."[84] Many others had the same thing to say about the Emergency.

The strategic leadership also recognized that the best ideas on tactical operations came from the units themselves. Directors of operations put their staffs to work collecting and evaluating these ideas, not dreaming up their own notions and foisting them on the infantry units.

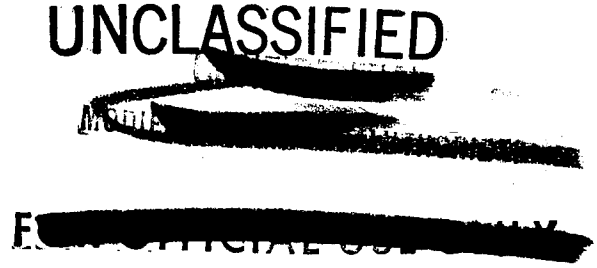
The British approach to winning hearts and minds deserves a great deal of study in the U.S. This principle was vital to success at every level and was impressed on the lowest soldier in the chain of command. For infantrymen, it basically meant protecting the citizens of the country, respecting their persons and their property, and not being afraid to get close to them.

*Courtesy of The Infantryman.*

Commonwealth and friendly nation students at the Jungle Warfare School

Finally, the British Army showed great wisdom in their appointments of generals to high positions in the two wars. First Briggs, then Templer, placed Malaya squarely on the road to success against the Communist terrorists. From the precedence they set, their successors knew that their best course was to steer straight ahead. In Borneo, the extremely capable Walker was replaced by another officer of high ability, Major General George Lea, former commander of the 22d SAS. These men were uniquely qualified to carry out their duties wisely and efficiently. Tactically experienced and gifted with strategic vision, they were able, by virtue of their forceful leadership, to dynamically combine small light infantry actions with the overall war strategy.

# *Appendix A**
# *Table of Contents—ATOM Manual*




# THE CONDUCT

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## IN

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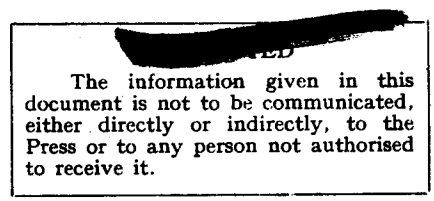
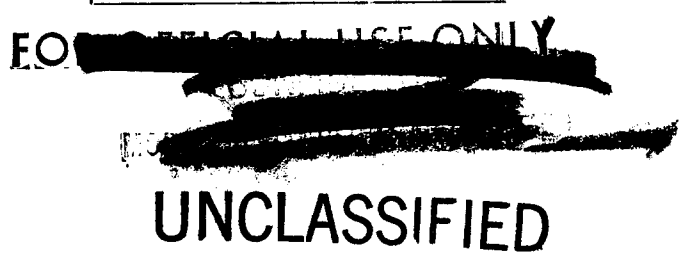
(Third Edition—1958)




**Source*: Great Britain, Army, Director of Operations, Malaya. *The Conduct of Anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaya*, 3d ed. (1958), i—ix.

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**Appendix A**

**PATROL ORDERS—AIDE MEMOIRE**

1. **Situation**
   (a) Topography.—Use maps, air photos, visual recce and patrol going map.
   (b) CT in Area:—
      (1) Strength.
      (2) Weapons and dress.
      (3) Known or likely locations and activities including past history.
   (c) Movements of Aborigines and civilians in area.
   (d) Own troops:—
      (1) Clearance.
      (2) Patrol activities of SF. Include means of identification.
      (3) Air and arty tasks

2. **Mission**
   This must be clear to patrol commander:—
   (a) Recce Patrol.—takes form of question or questions.
   (b) Fighting Patrol.—definite object.

3. **Execution**
   (a) Strength and composition of patrol.
   (b) Time out and anticipated time of return.
   (c) Method of movement to patrol area.
   (d) Routes out and in. If helicopters are to be used location and state of LZs.
   (e) Boundaries.
   (f) Probable bounds and RVs.
   (g) Formations.
   (h) Deception and cover plan.
   (j) Action to be taken on contact.
   (k) Action if ambushed.
   (l) Action if lost.
   (m) DO NOT:—
      (1) Move in file through rubber.
      (2) Move through defiles.
      (3) Cut unnecessarily.
      (4) Return by the same route as that used for outward move.
      (5) Allow weapons to become jammed through dirt.
      (6) Relax because you are nearing base.

4. **Administration and Logistics**
   (a) Rations:—
      (1) Type and number of days.
      (2) Resupply.

*Source: Great Britain, Army, Director of Operations, Malaya. *The Conduct of Anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaya*, 3d ed. (1958), XI.

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Appendix A—*Continued*

(3) Cooking.
(4) Dog rations.
(5) Rum.

(b) Equipment and Dress:—
(1) Change of clothing.
(2) Large or small pack.
(3) Poncho capes.
(4) Footwear.
(5) Maps, compasses, and air photos.

(c) Avoidance of noise:—
(1) Does equipment rattle?
(2) Leave behind men with coughs.

(d) Weapons:—
(1) Types and distribution.
(2) Special weapons—GF rifle, etc.

(e) Ammunition:—
(1) Type and distribution.
(2) Grenades, Hand and Rifle, including gas checks and clips for 80 grenades.
(3) Check grenade fuses.
(4) Signal cartridges.

(f) Medical:—
(1) First field dressing, J packs.
(2) Medical orderly and haversack.
(3) Water sterilising tablets.
(4) Salt tablets.
(5) Paludrine.
(6) DBP clothing.
(7) Foot powder.
(8) Copper sulphate ointment for burns.

(g) Special Equipment:—
(1) Saws and parangs.
(2) Cameras.
(3) Finger print outfit.
(4) Surrender pamphlets.
(5) Night equipment.
(6) Explosives.
(7) Dogs.
(8) Marker Balloons.

(h) Inspect all equipment for serviceability.

5. **Command and Signals**

(a) Frequencies:—
(1) Times of opening.
(2) Special instructions.
(3) Air.

**Appendix A**—*Continued*

(b) Codes:—
  (1) Net identification signs.
  (2) Codes.
  (3) Passwords.

(c) Check and test sets:—
  (1) Aerials.
  (2) CW keys.
  (3) Spare batteries.

(d) Ground/Air Communications:—
  (1) DZ panels and DZ letters allotted.
  (2) Ground/Air signal code.

**NOTE:**

**Check thoroughly that all points have been understood by patrol members.**

## Appendix A

## AMBUSH ORDERS—AIDE MEMOIRE

## REMEMBER SECURITY—DO NOT USE THE TELEPHONE DO NOT ALLOW MEN OUT AFTER BRIEFING

### Suggested Headings

1 **Situation**

(a) *Topography*.—Use of air Photographs, maps and local knowledge consider use of a guide.

(b) *CT*.—

(1) Expected strength.
(2) Names and anticipated order of march. Photographs.
(3) Dress and weapons of individuals.
(4) Which is the VIP.
(5) What are habits of party concerned.

(c) *SF*.—

(1) Guides or SEP to accompany.
(2) What other SF are doing.

(d) *Clearance*.—

(1) Challenge.
(2) Password.
(3) Identifications.

(e) *Civilians*.—

(1) Locations.
(2) Habits.

2. **Mission**

This must be clear in the mind of every man especially when a particular CT is to be killed.

3. **Execution**

(a) Type of layout.
(b) Position and direction of fire of groups.
(c) Dispersal point.
(d) Weapons to be carried.
(e) Composition of groups.
(f) Timings and routes.
(g) Formations during move in.
(h) Orders re springing.

(j) Distribution of fire.
(k) Use of grenades.
(l) Action on ambush being discovered.
(m) Order to cease firing.
(n) Orders re immediate follow up.
(o) Orders for search.
(p) Deliberate follow up.
(q) Signal to call off ambush.
(r) Rendezvous.
(s) Dogs—if any.
(t) Deception plan.
(u) Alerting.

4. **Administration and Logistics**

(a) Use of transport to area.

(b) Equipment and dress:—
Footwear for move in

(c) Rations—if any.

(d) Special equipment:—
(1) Night lighting equipment.
(2) Cameras.
(3) Finger print equipment.

(e) Medical:—
(1) First field dressing, first aid packs.
(2) Medical Orderly.
(3) Stretcher and ambulance.

(f) Reliefs.

(g) Administrative Area, if required orders re cooking, smoking

(h) Transport for return journey.

(j) Inspection of personnel and equipment:—
(1) Men with colds not to be taken.
(2) Is zeroing of weapons correct?
(3) Is ammunition fresh?
(4) Are magazines properly filled?

5. **Command and Signals**

Success signal.

# NOTES

## *Chapter 3*

1. Great Britain, Army, Director of Operations, Malaya, *The Conduct of Anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaya*, 3d ed. (1958), II—6, hereafter cited as the *ATOM Manual.*
2. *Richard Miers, Shoot to Kill* (London: Faber and Faber, 1959), 29.
3. *ATOM Manual*, III—5; J. B. Oldfield, *The Green Howards in Malaya* (Aldershot, Hampshire, England: Gale and Polden, 1953), 21—22; and Richard L. Clutterbuck, *The Long, Long War: Counterinsurgency in Malaya and Vietnam* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), 60—64.
4. Jac Weller, *Fire and Movement: Bargain-Basement Warfare in the Far East* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1967), 46. This estimate may be high. Clutterbuck, *Long, Long War*, 60, notes that 423,000 persons were resettled in one year.
5. Miers, *Shoot to Kill*, 29; and M. C. A. Henniker, *Red Shadow over Malaya* (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1955), 50.
6. Henniker, *Red Shadow*, 297.
7. Miers, *Shoot to Kill*, 32.
8. Henniker, *Red Shadow*, 297.
9. Miers, *Shoot to Kill*, 29.
10. Henniker, *Red Shadow*, 16.
11. Oldfield, *Green Howards*, 5; and Clutterbuck, *Long, Long War*, 51.
12. Henniker, *Red Shadow*, 16.
13. Clutterbuck, *Long, Long War*, 50.
14. Ibid., 100.
15. Oldfield, *Green Howards*, 33.
16. Clutterbuck, *Long, Long War*, 52.
17. Miers, *Shoot to Kill*, 52.
18. Ibid., 197—98.
19. *ATOM Manual*, V—1.
20. Ibid., V—2.
21. Ibid., V—7.
22. Ibid., V—3 through V—6.
23. The stress given to quick, accurate fire by the cadre at the JWS and by unit leaders cannot be overemphasized.
24. Tony Geraghty, *Inside the Special Air Service* (Nashville, TN: Battery Press, 1981), 33. One estimate calculated that 1,800 man-hours in patrolling were expended for every contact. The ratio of man-hours employed to kill was much higher of course.
25. Oldfield, *Green Howards*, xxiii.
26. *ATOM Manual*, chapter VIII.
27. Geraghty, *Special Air Service*, 22.
28. Miers, *Shoot to Kill*, 103.

29. Oldfield, *Green Howards*, 28. An example cited here describes a platoon patrol which covered sixty miles in thirteen days.
30. *ATOM Manual*, chapter XI.
31. Ibid., XI—2.
32. Oldfield, *Green Howards*, 98.
33. Miers, *Shoot to Kill*, 201.
34. Tom Pocock, *Fighting General: The Public and Private Campaigns of General Sir Walter Walker* (London: Collins, 1973), 104.
35. *ATOM Manual*, XI—15.
36. Henniker, *Red Shadow*, 166.
37. Ibid., 249, 260.
38. Oldfield, *Green Howards*, 63; and Geraghty, *Special Air Service*, 34.
39. Henniker, *Red Shadow*, 166.
40. Harold Douglas James and Denis Sheil-Small, *The Gurkhas* (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1966), 262.
41. Miers, *Shoot to Kill*, 160.
42. Henniker, *Red Shadow*, 133—35.
43. *ATOM Manual*, chapter XIII.
44. Henniker, *Red Shadow*, 256. The author relates how a Fijian infantry unit known for its excellence on patrol violated the route SOP one day and lost six wounded and five killed to a CT ambush.
45. Ibid., 50.
46. J. A. C. Mackie, *KONFRONTASI: The Indonesia-Malaysia Dispute, 1963—1966* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 215.
47. Pocock, *Walter Walker*, 201, 215.
48. Harold Douglas James and Denis Sheil-Small, *The Undeclared War: The Story of the Indonesian Confrontation, 1962—1966* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1971), 56.
49. David Lee Watkins, "Confrontation: The Struggle for Northern Borneo," MMAS thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1978, 25.
50. "Jungle Patrol, 2nd Battalion the Parachute Regiment in Borneo," *The Infantryman* 81 (November 1965):74—75, reprinted from *Pegasus*, the journal of the British Airborne Forces, hereafter cited as "Jungle Patrol." See also Lieutenant Colonel A. S. Harvey, "Random Reflections of an Infantry Battalion Commander on the Indonesian Border," *The Infantryman* 81 (November 1965):50—51.
51. Pocock, *Walter Walker*, 93.
52. Ibid., 137.
53. Ibid., 159—60.
54. Ibid., 172.
55. James and Sheil-Small, *Undeclared War*, 99—101.
56. Peter Dickens, *SAS, the Jungle Frontier: 22 Special Air Service Regiment in the Borneo Campaign, 1963—1966* (London: Arms and Armour Press, 1985), 65.
57. Lieutenant Colonel P. E. B. Badger, "Tigers in the Jungle," *The Infantryman* 80 (October 1964):50.
58. "Jungle Patrol," 73. Planning considerations and operational parameters for the conduct of helicopter operations in Borneo are discussed in Air Vice Marshal C. N. Foxley-Norris, "Air Aspects of Operations Against 'Confrontation'," in *Brassey's Annual: The Armed Forces Yearbook, 1967*, edited by Major General J. L. Moulton, et al. (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967), 281—91.

59. Dickens, *SAS*, 88.

60. "Jungle Patrol," 74—75.

61. James and Sheil-Small, *Undeclared War*, 86.

62. Pocock, *Walter Walker*, 168.

63. Weller, *Fire and Movement*, 48.

64. Lieutenant Colonel H. J. Sweeney, "Long Range Patrolling," *The Infantryman* 81 (November 1965):20.

65. Geraghty, *Special Air Service*, 46.

66. Ibid., 66. In Malaya, the SAS worked in the deep jungle with the tribal aborigines. They functioned there primarily in the role of "Hearts and Minds." They also provided terrain reconnaissance, set booby traps on CT camps and food caches, conducted river patrols, mounted ambushes, and experimented in deep insertion through parachuting into the jungle canopy (tree jumping). See ibid., 26—32.

67. Dickens, *SAS*, 53.

68. Ibid., 71.

69. Ibid., 75.

70. Ibid., 102.

71. Ibid., 34. It should also be noted that due to a shortage in SAS personnel, British and Gurkha paratroop companies were converted to SAS squadrons.

72. Pocock, *Walter Walker*, 197.

73. Ibid.

74. Geraghty, *Special Air Service*, 57.

75. James and Sheil-Small, *Undeclared War*, 170.

76. Watkins, "Confrontation," 90.

77. Ibid., 81.

78. Dickens, *SAS*, 36.

79. Pocock, *Walter Walker*, 192.

80. Weller, *Fire and Movement*, 51—56, contains an excellent discussion of the equipment and weaponry issues.

81. Ibid., 56; and Pocock, *Walter Walker*, 192.

82. Pocock, *Walter Walker*, 216.

83. Ibid., 189. See also, Watkins, "Confrontation," 87.

84. Quoted in Watkins, "Confrontation," 73.

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